

**Welcoming Remarks**  
**Independence Day Reception**

**The Residence**

**July 5, 2005 (6:30 pm)**

**As prepared for delivery**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon and welcome to this celebration of American independence.

Alex, thank you for your kind remarks, and I look forward to working with you and all of our colleagues at Embassy Paris and at our constituent posts in France. I also look forward to coordinating our work at Embassy Paris with the work Ambassadors Morella and Oliver and their staffs perform at our OECD and UNESCO missions.

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I am very pleased to be with you here today and to greet all of you as I assume my responsibilities as American Ambassador to France. I expect to present my credentials to President Chirac soon in order to make my status “official.” My wife Debbie and my son Walker, who are with me, share my enthusiasm and look forward to a great experience in France over the next few years. We humbly recognize the extreme honor that goes with representing America in France, which is our oldest ally and one of America’s original friends.

I would like to take a moment to thank all of those involved in making today’s gathering such a joyful occasion. Mary Finch wonderfully performed our national anthems. Many businesses and sponsors have generously contributed to this Independence Day celebration. We are fortunate in having the Air Force “Wings of Dixie” band

and the “Dandies,” from EuroDisney, to provide musical entertainment. In case you are wondering, dancing is not prohibited. American Independence is meant to be celebrated, so I hope we all have fun this evening.

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The opportunity to serve my country in France is a special one for me. As a student, I was lucky enough to visit France in 1962 and I remember very well my visit to the Normandy beaches and the American cemeteries there. I came away with a deep appreciation for the sacrifices made by countless others who have come before us so that we might enjoy the freedoms we know today. As we commemorate American independence, let us also honor our men and women in uniform who today are defending our freedoms and trying to expand freedom’s reach around the world.

Through that early visit to Normandy, I also came to appreciate the strong bonds of partnership and friendship between the United States and France, two countries linked rather than separated by the Atlantic, two countries that have worked together repeatedly in the name of freedom during our long history together.

We Americans cannot celebrate this anniversary of our independence without expressing thanks to France for its support during our Revolutionary War, and to the courage and determination of the Marquis de Lafayette, General Rochambeau, and all of the French forces that contributed with decisive effect to American independence.

Lafayette was well aware of what he was accomplishing in helping create the United States. As he said so succinctly but so accurately: “*Humanity has won its battle. Liberty now has its country.*” We thank Lafayette,

Rochambeau, their forces, and France itself for the sacrifices they made in ensuring our independence.

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I would like to say a few words to our many French friends who have joined us this afternoon.

Merci de votre présence aujourd'hui avec nous, et merci de votre chaleureux accueil au moment où j'entame mes fonctions d'Ambassadeur des Etats-Unis en France. C'est un honneur pour moi de représenter les Etats-Unis auprès de votre grande nation, et je me réjouis de l'occasion que me donnera cette mission de mieux vous connaître ainsi que votre beau pays.

J'aimerais remercier la France et le peuple français d'avoir rendu possible ce jour de commémoration nationale. En combattant à nos côtés au cours de notre guerre d'Indépendance, le marquis de Lafayette, le général

de Rochambeau, et les troupes françaises ont joué un rôle important, voire déterminant, dans notre lutte pour la liberté. Les Américains sont à jamais reconnaissants à la France du soutien qu'elle leur a apporté en ce moment crucial.

J'arrive en France avec une profonde admiration pour votre histoire et votre culture, conscient de l'importance des nombreux liens qui vous unissent aux Etats-Unis, et du partenariat qui existe depuis bien longtemps entre nos deux pays. Je suis impatient de coopérer avec vous pour relever les nombreux défis qui se posent à nos deux pays, et que nous devons chercher à surmonter ensemble.

Je suis ici pour représenter mon pays du mieux que je le pourrai, mais pour cela, j'ai l'intention de vous écouter, de recevoir vos avis, d'échanger des points de vues avec vous, de m'instruire à votre contact, afin que les Etats-Unis

et la France, désireux de mieux se comprendre, puissent faire progresser nos relations pour notre plus grand profit et pour celui du reste du monde.

C'est aujourd'hui la première des nombreuses occasions que je vais avoir de vous rencontrer. J'ai l'intention de parcourir la France et d'apprendre à mieux connaître vos régions et vos villes -- tout ce qui constitue la "France profonde." Dès cette semaine, je vais me rendre en Avignon et à Aix-en-Provence, et je suis très heureux de pouvoir voyager dans ce magnifique pays si tôt après mon arrivée. Mais ce sera toujours un plaisir de rentrer à la maison, car désormais la maison c'est . . . Paris. Je ne vois vraiment pas ce que je pourrais demander de plus.

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In closing, I would like to read President Bush's proclamation for this Independence Day.

*Since July 4, 1776, Americans have experienced freedom's power to overcome tyranny, inspire hope in times of trial, and turn the creative gifts of men and women to the pursuits of peace. Across generations, our Nation has defended and advanced liberty.*

*The words of our Founding Fathers first guided a country of 4 million souls, yet they put large events in motion. When the Liberty Bell sounded at the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, one who witnessed the birth of freedom in our country said, "It rang as if it meant something." In our time it means something still. America continues to proclaim liberty throughout the world, and we remain a country full of hope and promise where opportunity thrives, where all stand equal before the law, and where our freedoms are celebrated.*



*Americans live in freedom because of the enduring power of our ideals. In the midst of World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt reminded our troops that our Nation believes in the "right to liberty under God -- for all peoples and races and groups and nations, everywhere in the world." Today, a new generation of Americans continues to defend our Nation and spread freedom. On this Fourth of July, we honor the brave men and women of our military, and their families, and we express our gratitude for their courage, dedication to duty, and love of country.*

*Laura and I send our best wishes to all Americans on Independence Day. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.*

*GEORGE W. BUSH*

Again, I thank you all for being here this evening.

Please enjoy this celebration, and please join me in raising  
a glass as we toast American Independence and Franco-  
American friendship: Vive la France! God Bless America!